

Letter from Gilbert Grosvenor to Alexander Graham Bell, January 26, 1904

GILBERT H. GROSVENOR PUBLISHED BY EDITOR THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY National Geographic Magazine **HUBBARD MEMORIAL HALL SIXTEENTH AND M STREETS WASHINGTON, D. C.** January 26, 1904. Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, Board of Regents Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. See page 2 Dear Dr. Bell:

In accordance with your request I wish to make the following suggestion which I outlined in brief in my conversation with you yesterday:

One of the objects of the Smithsonian Institution is the diffusion of knowledge. The Institution accomplishes this object by the publication of numerous reports and also by serving as a clearing house through which scientific reports not its own are distributed throughout the world. The reports of the Institution, however, reach only a certain limited class. Furthermore much of the work the various departments of the Institution are doing does not appear in the reports or is published so long after it is done that it does not have immediate interest.

There are at least several millions of people in the United States who are interested in the work the Institution is doing in its various departments. The reports of the Institution serve a very small percentage of this class. A very great proportion of Americans get their knowledge of what the Institution is doing through newspaper reports. Most of these reporters are untrained and the result is that the greater part most of the descriptions of the Institutions work published are not correct and very often give an entirely false impression.

In view of these conditions I would urge that the Institution make it the business of some one person to prepare and send regularly to 1000 news papers and magazines bulletins

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giving brief, interesting and authentic account, of the Institution's work. These bulletins could be issued two or three times a week at very little expense and would be very gladly used by the news papers provided that the matter is well written. In this way several millions at least of Americans would be kept in touch with the Institution, whose powers as a diffuser of knowledge would then be greatly extended. In other words the Institution should establish a news bureau of its own work.

Yours very truly, Gilbert H. Grosvenor